MARVEL ZOMBIES
MARVEL SPOTLIGHT
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PLUGGING IN THE ZOMBIE SPOTLIGHT

We've tried to hold the zombies at bay as long as we can! We've boarded up the windows and blocked the doors with copy machines, heavy desks and a stack of *Fantastic Four Omnibus* volumes! We've even tossed 'em staff assistant Irving Forbush to keep them occupied – but they tossed him back! It really doesn't look too good for us to hold things together, so we're pushing this issue of Zombie *Spotlight* out as quick as we can and calling our life insurance companies to make sure our policies are up to date! Tell my mother I love her! THE ZOMBIES ARE HERE!!!!

I: A Gruesome Good Time: The Story of the Marvel Zombies

Spotlight takes a look back at the dawn of the Marvel undead, from the first awakening in *Ultimate Fantastic Four*, to the onslaught of carnivores in *Marvel Zombies* and the *Army of Darkness* crossover, to the interstellar feeding frenzy of *Marvel Zombies 2*, with artist **Greg Land**, editor **John Barber** and writer **John Layman**!

II: Whose Stomach Are You In?

As Marvel Zombies fans get ready to digest the disgustingly delicious new sequel, *Marvel Zombies 2*, *Spotlight*'s Dugan Trodglen catches up with the principal creators involved in the mayhem: writer **Robert Kirkman** and artist **Sean Phillips**.

III: Life Among the Zombies

Spotlight takes a close look at the first brush of the Marvel Zombies with the Marvel Universe in *Black Panther* with writer **Reginald Hudlin**.

IV: The Crazy World of Arthur Suydam

Kirkman and Phillips may animate the undead corpses of the Marvel Zombies, but it's artist **Arthur Suydam** who opens the door and lets them out to play! You know the insanely popular covers – now *Spotlight*'s John Rhett Thomas introduces you to the mild-mannered and immensely talented mind that brings them to you!

V: A Little Magik With Your Zombies?

Mystic Arcana is the perfect complement to this issue of Zombie *Spotlight*: a little magic with your monster mayhem! *Mystic Arcana* is the brainchild of writer **David Sexton**, on hand to discuss the limited series that is Marvel's magical event of the year! Plus, the ever-popular magical mistress herself, Illyana Rasputin, aka Magik, is featured in an interview with *New X-Men* writer **Chris Yost**!

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A GRUESOME GOOD TIME: THE STORY OF THE MARVEL ZOMBIES

IN TODAY'S POP CULTURE WORLD, A LOT OF HYPE IS "DEAD ON ARRIVAL." *MARVEL ZOMBIES* WAS NO EXCEPTION... AND MARVEL FANS WENT INTO A FRENZY! BY DUGAN TRODGLEN

It all started, as these things often do, with hype. The superstar creative team of Mark Millar and Greg Land were taking on *Ultimate Fantastic Four* and their first story was going to be a doozy. Titled "Crossover," the cover to their first issue featured the Ultimate Reed Richards seemingly making contact with a counterpart from another dimension. Could it be the long-speculated meeting between the upstart Ultimate Universe and the classic mainstream Marvel Universe? Ever since the launch of the Ultimate line, fans wondered if and when the two universes might meet, so a title like "Crossover" was provocative to say the least.

Ah, but this time the hype went hand in hand with a little misdirection. An other-dimensional Reed did indeed contact the Ultimate Universe, but his was no world of Marvel heroes. This was a universe on which a terrible cosmic virus had infected the classic Marvel characters and turned them into voracious zombies! Now, having eaten almost everyone on the planet, they were trying to reach another world in search of new victims. The Zombie FF tricked Reed into helping them reach his world, but the Ultimate Fantastic Four, in concert with that Earth's Magneto, managed to close the gateway before any other zombies reached them.

The monster-obsessed Greg Land was the perfect artist to introduce us to the world of the Marvel Zombies. One gets the impression that if horror were the dominant genre in comic books instead of super heroes, Greg wouldn't mind a bit. "Absolutely!" Greg declares. "Ever since I was a little kid I was infatuated with monsters, especially the Universal Monsters and *Famous Monsters of Filmland* magazine. My studio walls are lined with monster posters and memorabilia."

Those old magazines turned out to be of great use for Greg and his stunning photo-referenced art. When asked about how he incorporated the monstrous creatures into his often beautiful pencils, he explains, "I look at my old *Monsters of Filmland* mags and *National Geographics* for the references on skull and bones and things." Another tricky aspect of the story was that he was dealing with two teams of essentially the same characters — one "normal," one zombiefied. What is the right balance in terms of how they are different, and more importantly, how they are similar? "I tried to keep the individuality of the characters consistent between the two," he explains. "This meaning the body stance, the way they carry themselves. I wanted them to be recognizable to their counterparts."

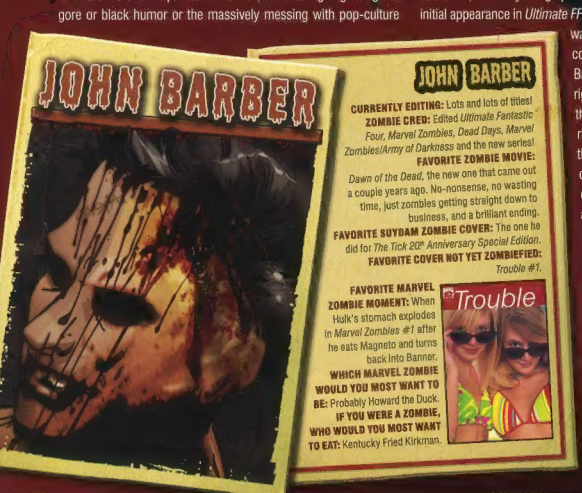
GREG LAND
GREG LAND
CURRENTLY DRAWING: Ultimate Power
ZOMBIE CRED: Ultimate Fantastic Four #21-32
FAVORITE ZOMBIE MOVIE: Shaun of the Dead and Dawn of the Dead remake.
FAVORITE SUYDAM COVER: Ghost Rider #11 cover, where GR is fighting Jack O'Lantern
FAVORITE COVER NOT YET ZOMBIEFIED: Fantastic Four #112: Thing vs. Hulk by Buscema!
WHICH MARVEL ZOMBIE WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE: The hungriest one!
IF YOU WERE A ZOMBIE, WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO EAT: Kate Beckinsale!! MMMM.....
Fantastic Four HULK THING

So the Zombie FF were defeated. But what of the zombies back on their own world? It seemed like a story worth telling. Before the *Ultimate FF* story even hit, Marvel knew they had something special on their hands, so they recruited zombie comic expert Robert Kirkman (*Walking Dead*) and artist Sean Phillips to tell the tale of what became of the Marvel "Zombie-verse". The perfectly titled *Marvel Zombies* (the term has historically been used to describe ardently loyal Marvel Comics readers) was born. His needed to be a tale that didn't dance around what these characters did, and Marvel editorial gave Kirkman and Phillips seemingly free range to go all the way with gruesome acts perpetrated by the undead versions of classic Marvel heroes. Associate editor John Barber: "What was really funny was that I don't think Robert believed us when we told him to go crazy on this, and to push it as far as he could. The first couple ideas Robert sent in were — I'm sure he'll kill me for saying this — almost a little timid. Not because Robert's a timid writer. If you've read *Walking Dead* (Robert's creator-owned Image title) you know that's not the case. But I think he thought we wanted something that was kind of…safe."

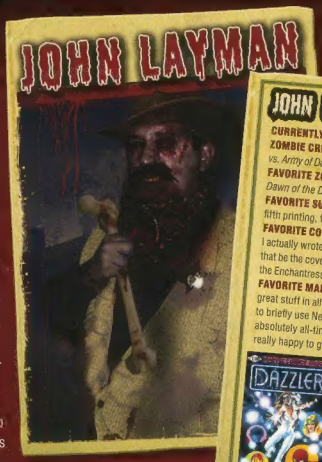
Once it became clear that "safe" was off the table, Kirkman sank his teeth in, so to speak, and awaited the reaction from Marvel. Again, Barber: "Robert told me, or I read him saying somewhere, that he thought we'd just fire him when the first script came in. But we loved it. There were a couple tweaks made, but *nothing* regarding the gore or black humor or the massively messing with pop-culture icons that we were supposed to be protecting the image of. I think when Robert realized we all *liked* that kind of thing, he realized he could push the envelope a little more. And to be honest, especially when Sean Phillips' brilliant, gory, evocative art came in, (fellow editors) Ralph Macchio, Nicole Boose and I were a little worried that *we'd* be the ones getting fired. But Joe Quesada loved it, too."

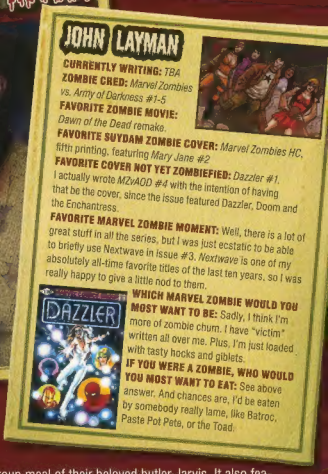
As it turned out, not holding back, and incorporating Kirkman's dark sense of humor, was the right decision (as was getting painter Arthur Suydam to parody classic Marvel covers with zombie versions) and *Marvel Zombies* went from sleeper hit to genuine phenomenon, ironically living up to the "false hype" of the characters' initial appearance in *Ultimate FF*. What made it such a success? "It was a weird alchemy of everything coming together just right," says Barber. "The right concept at the right time with the right name and the right launching platform and the right writer and the right artist and the right cover painter and the right cover concept. I mean, it's kind of a stupid idea. But Mark Millar and Greg Land's stuff in *Ultimate Fantastic Four* was great, so we had hopes for the series. And when we got the script in, and the art, and the cover, we knew we had a really good comic in our hands. But that doesn't mean it's going to be popular.

"And when the first issue actually came out, it sold really well. We were really happy with the


JOHN BARBER
JOHN BARBER
CURRENTLY EDITING: Lots and lots of titles!
ZOMBIE CRED: Edited Ultimate Fantastic Four, Marvel Zombies, Dead Days, Marvel Zombies/Army of Darkness and the new series!
FAVORITE ZOMBIE MOVIE: Dawn of the Dead, the new one that came out a couple years ago. No-nonsense, no wasting time, just zombies getting straight down to business, and a brilliant ending.
FAVORITE SUYDAM ZOMBIE COVER: The one he did for The Tick 20th Anniversary Special Edition.
FAVORITE COVER NOT YET ZOMBIEFIED: Trouble #1.
FAVORITE MARVEL ZOMBIE MOMENT: When Hulk's stomach explodes in Marvel Zombies #1 after he eats Magneto and turns back into Banner.
WHICH MARVEL ZOMBIE WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE: Probably Howard the Duck.
IF YOU WERE A ZOMBIE, WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO EAT: Kentucky Fried Kirkman.
Trouble

numbers it was doing. That was a great start for a weird book like this. I mean, this was just a strange book that we figured would sell okay, but the people that read it would really like it. It's got that dark edge to it that's really pretty subversive, especially for giant corporate icons, if you think about it in those terms. So the first issue sold better than we expected and everybody was really happy with it, in terms of quality and sales. And if the sales-drop-off for issue #2 wasn't too bad, we'd have a nice little financial success. But it turned out that issue one was the worst selling issue of *Zombies* we ever did. Each subsequent issue sold better than the previous one. That was crazy."




JOHN LAYMAN
CURRENTLY WRITING: TBA
ZOMBIE CRED: Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness #1-5
FAVORITE ZOMBIE MOVIE: Dawn of the Dead remake.
FAVORITE SUYDAM ZOMBIE COVER: Marvel Zombies HC, fifth printing, featuring Mary Jane #2
FAVORITE COVER NOT YET ZOMBIEFIED: Dazzler #1. I actually wrote MZvAOD #4 with the intention of having that be the cover, since the issue featured Dazzler, Doom and the Enchantress.
FAVORITE MARVEL ZOMBIE MOMENT: Well, there is a lot of great stuff in all the series, but I was just ecstatic to be able to briefly use Nextwave in issue #3. Nextwave is one of my absolutely all-time favorite titles of the last ten years, so I was really happy to give a little nod to them.
DAZZLER
WHICH MARVEL ZOMBIE WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE: Sadly, I think I'm more of zombie chum. I have "victim" written all over me. Plus, I'm just loaded with tasty hocks and giblets.
IF YOU WERE A ZOMBIE, WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO EAT: See above answer. And chances are, I'd be eaten by somebody really lame, like Batroc, Paste Pot Pete, or the Toad.

But in Robert Kirkman's world, not so crazy. Barber continues, "Kirkman does that on *Walking Dead* and *Invincible* — sales-wise, both of those books consistently trend upwards. And that's really rare, and we hadn't seen that on his Marvel books before, and POW! — there it was."

And with sales of the hardcover collection among the best Marvel had ever seen from a collected edition, there was no way Marvel wasn't going to capitalize on the success of *Marvel Zombies*, and it sure seemed like their fans wanted more. Thus, a franchise was born. First up was a crossover with Dynamite Comics' licensed *Army of Darkness* line. *Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness* was written by John Layman. Robert Kirkman was so closely identified with these characters that it was no small task to follow up his work. "I just knew I had a *monster* book to live up to, no pun intended," Layman says. "But I also knew, to some extent, this book would have a built-in market, just based on the high-concept. So it was my aim to make it better and funnier and more entertaining than anybody expected it to be." It certainly was, as Layman quickly learned that all bets are off when it comes to the Marvel Zombies. He could go hog-wild.

Another writing challenge was threading *Army of Darkness* star Ash into the fabric of the Marvel Zombie world. Layman: "I figured out how the timeline would best work, and ran that by Kirkman. Basically, I wanted to get some character moments between Ash and certain heroes *before* they became zombies, and also knew that if I set the book after the first series, where the world is mostly destroyed and the few zombies who remained had Galactus powers, there would not be much story. So I set it as a prequel to the original series, and just made sure Robert and I were on the same page as far as what characters were off-limits to me, because he had plans for them in the *Dead Days* one-shot prequel that would be set, roughly, at the same time."

Marvel Zombies: Dead Days reunited the Zombies with Kirkman and Phillips for the outrageous origin story of the Marvel Zombies. It featured jaw-dropping moments hinted at in the series such as a horrified Spider-Man eating Mary Jane, and the Avengers enjoying a group meal of their beloved butler Jarvis. It also featured Suydam's most ambitious cover yet, a takeoff on Jim Lee's classic *X-Men #1* wraparound. It was another smash.

The Zombies' first crossover with the Marvel Universe occurred in *Black Panther*, where Reginald Hudlin and Francis Portela took the Panther-led Fantastic Four to the Zombie-verse. It was more mayhem and hilarity, as the creators had a blast with these subversive takes on beloved characters. After that, it was time for Kirkman and Phillips to continue the story of the core Marvel Zombies, inhabited with the cosmic power of Galactus at the end of the first series. Kirkman has vowed to go even further with *Marvel Zombies 2*, so there's no telling what's going to happen. One thing you should count on, though, is fun — the kind of fun you only get from the wicked world of Marvel Zombies.

ZOMBIE CHECKLIST

Is your collection of Marvel Zombies totally complete? Here's a list of the featured appearances by our favorite flesh-eaters!

- **Ultimate Fantastic Four #21-23, 30-32**
- **Marvel Zombies #1-5**
- **Marvel Zombies: Dead Days one-shot**
- **Black Panther #28-30**
- **Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness #1-5**
- **Marvel Zombies 2 – new series out now!**

And to collect them in hardcover:

- **Ultimate Fantastic Four Vol. 3 HC**
- **Marvel Zombies HC**
- **Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness HC**
- **Marvel Zombies: The Covers HC**

WHOSE STOMACH ARE YOU IN?

REUNITING THE CREATIVE TEAM OF ROBERT KIRKMAN AND SEAN PHILLIPS, *MARVEL ZOMBIES 2* IS THE *CIVIL WAR* OF FLESH-EATING SUPER HEROES! BY DUGAN TRODGLEN

Before we sit down and talk to Robert Kirkman, we would like to point out that he is so much more than simply the "zombie guy" — even though his most well known Marvel work is the stealth hit known as *Marvel Zombies*, and his brilliant zombie book *The Walking Dead*, for Image comics, was a break-out hit from its inception. For instance, he also created the acclaimed, unapologetically super-hero world of *Invincible* for Image, and for Marvel, aside from his current lengthy run on *Ultimate X-Men* which has been full of creative twists and turns, Robert has also written two of the most out-and-out fun books Marvel has produced in recent years: *Marvel Team-Up* and *Irredeemable Ant-Man*. Neither book quite survived the long haul, but maybe like the Marvel Zombies, they will rise again one day! Speaking of those zombies, the phenomenon just won't die, and with a new limited series arriving, *Marvel Spotlight* talked to Robert Kirkman about the past, present and future of Marvel's own living dead.

SPOTLIGHT: In recent months *Marvel Spotlight* has covered *Civil War*, *Dark Tower*, the death of Captain America, and *World War Hulk*. Now it's *Marvel Zombies*. You've arrived at last!

ROBERT: Very cool!

SPOTLIGHT: As writer of such a surprising hit comic, perhaps you can sum up the appeal of *Marvel Zombies* from your perspective.

ROBERT: I think the appeal is that it's something unique that Marvel Comics has never done in its history: to allow stories about their characters that go to the level that *Marvel Zombies* goes to. It's definitely a noncorporate mentality. I don't think Paramount would allow Star Trek Zombies! It's basically the Marvel characters doing stuff you wouldn't want on the side of lunchboxes. It's a very risky move.

SPOTLIGHT: (*Laughter.*) That would sell though – those lunchboxes!

ROBERT: I'm sure there will be lunchboxes by the time this interview is out! Lunchboxes filled with brains! (*Laughter.*) I gotta hand it to (Editor in Chief) Joe Quesada and (Publisher) Dan Buckley and all the dudes running Marvel for allowing this book to happen. You just don't see Spider-Man ripping his own leg off. It was just something unique that sparked the interest of fans.

I turned in that first script thinking I was gonna be fired from the book. I mean, I turned it in and I was very excited because I was very happy about it. I was telling a friend about it – a friend named Steven Spielberg! (*Laughter.*) And he said, "Are you crazy? You can't do that in a Marvel Comic!" And I said, "Oh, Crap! You're right!" So when Marvel called later that day – it was editor Ralph Macchio – I thought for sure he was gonna say, "Yeah…this is a Marvel Comic. I don't know what you're thinking, but you are fired and I don't ever want you working in my office again. You've got problems!"

But instead he said, "Hey, I read the script. It looks great." I thought, "Wow! They really weren't paying attention!" I thought for sure when the art came in it would get edited, but the art came in and they said, "Looks good!" I don't think they changed anything. Very crazy.

SPOTLIGHT: Were you done writing the entire series before it became clear this book was a much bigger deal than anyone thought it would be?

"IT'S BASICALLY THE MARVEL CHARACTERS DOING STUFF YOU WOULDN'T WANT ON THE SIDE OF LUNCHBOXES."
—MARVEL ZOMBIES writer Robert Kirkman

ROBERT: I was done writing the whole thing when it became a big success, but I think I was still working on issue #4 or #5 when the first issue came out. We were probably into a second printing of the first issue by the time I was done, but it wasn't a huge thing yet. I was writing it before the *Ultimate Fantastic Four* issues came out. It all came together very quickly. They sent me scripts. I was going off the scripts and hadn't actually seen all of the issues. So I didn't even know how well that story was going to be received when I was writing my book. It could have definitely been the flop of 2006.

SPOTLIGHT: I certainly thought the *Marvel Zombies* series was a reaction to positive buzz about the *Ultimate FF* story. Sounds like they knew going in that they were on to something.

ROBERT: I think it may have been Joe Quesada's idea. I'll give him credit for that.

SPOTLIGHT: One of the things you mentioned in your introduction to the *Marvel Zombies* hardcover…

ROBERT: (*Interrupts, finishing sentence.*) …is that Ralph Macchio is the Karate Kid?

SPOTLIGHT: Yes, you really drove that home! (*Laughter.*) But the other thing is that you were originally looking for a human voice, a sympathetic point of view character for the book.

ROBERT: Yes. It took a long time for it to even occur to me that the book could be about the zombies. So there was a long time where I was pitching stuff that was…not that good I guess? It was standard zombie stuff like "Luke Cage Against the World." A lot of people online complained, "Luke Cage can't be a zombie! He has unbreakable skin!" [*People became infected by the zombie virus when bitten by a zombie. – Ed.*] And I agree with that, but when I was working *Marvel Zombies* pitches, Mark Millar's *Ultimate Fantastic Four* scripts would say, "Human Torch is being chased by the Marvel Zombies" or whatever. He would pick out certain characters for certain things, but for the most part when he mentioned the zombies it would be as a pack; "the Marvel Zombies do this, the Marvel

The epicenter, the start of this...plague, or whatever you would call it—was in the center of Manhattan. That's the first known instance.
We don't know how—but something from another world broke through—came to our world. The Avengers, as is often the case, were the first on the scene.
The first to be infected.
Colonel America, Hawkeye, Black Widow, Luke Cage, etc. Marvel... they were the start of this.
In a matter of hours it has spread to all corners of the globe. As far as we can tell, only meta-humans are effected—but that may just be because us normal humans are being completely eaten and can't fight off these monsters.
As it is now, it's already too late to be contained. But it may not be too late to stop it—maybe even reverse it.
You are this planet's last hope... if you do not succeed—we all die.
That is why I've gathered you all here.
DEAD DAYS: Nick Fury comes up with a plan in the Dead Days one-shot.

Zombies do that." And so without seeing the art, I didn't know who was a zombie and who wasn't. So then we discovered Greg Land drawing Luke Cage pretty prominently and that killed that idea.

SPOTLIGHT: I guess your assumption was that Luke Cage would be the safest character to not be a zombie.

ROBERT: Yeah. He has unbreakable skin. I don't know how he's supposed to be zombiefied! I'm sure there's some way for it to happen. Maybe the Hulk could bite through his skin.

But Marvel wasn't crazy about the Luke Cage idea, and rightfully so, and I eventually came up with the idea of just making it about the zombies.

SPOTLIGHT: Did that give you a lot of freedom in your storytelling?

ROBERT: Oh, yeah. Once I hit on that it was like an open book. Everything fell into place instantly. I remember coming to Marvel and saying, "I want to make it about the zombies and you guys seem into that so that's what I'm gonna do. I want to get your okay, though, because if it's gonna be about the zombies there's gonna be some nasty stuff in the book." You know, the things they do are all things you would not normally show in a Marvel book. And they said, "Oh, you know, they're not humans at this point; they're monsters, so we can get away with a lot!" Sounds good to me!

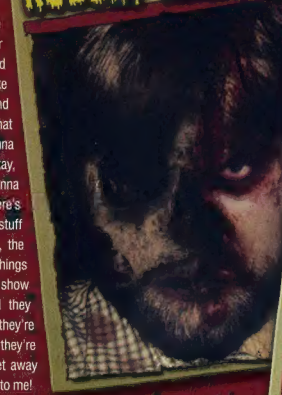
SPOTLIGHT: Do you have a favorite of the core zombies to which you most enjoy giving a voice?

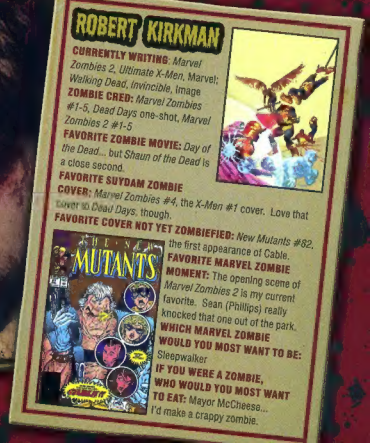
ROBERT: I like Giant Man a lot. I think it's kind of odd that Giant Man is the leader of the gang, you know, because Colonel America is right there. I guess someone with a more scientific mind like Hank Pym would be able to deal with the situation. Colonel America is a soldier and equipped to deal with most any situation, but dammit, I thought it was neat that Giant Man was running the show.

SPOTLIGHT: Plus we get the cool classic Giant Man costume, which I believe Greg Land decided on in *Ultimate FF*.

ROBERT: Yeah, yeah. Very cool.

SPOTLIGHT: One of the standout scenes in *Marvel Zombies* was what you did with the Hank Pym/Wasp dynamic. They have a rough history with abuse and you took that well over the top.




ROBERT KIRKMAN
CURRENTLY WRITING: Marvel Zombies 2, Ultimate X-Men, Marvel; Walking Dead, Invincible, Image
ZOMBIE CRED: Marvel Zombies #1-5, Dead Days one-shot, Marvel Zombies 2 #1-5
FAVORITE ZOMBIE MOVIE: Day of the Dead... but Shaun of the Dead is a close second.
FAVORITE SUYDAM ZOMBIE COVER: Marvel Zombies #4, the X-Men #1 cover. Love that cover to Dead Days, though.
FAVORITE COVER NOT YET ZOMBIEFIED: New Mutants #82, the first appearance of Cable.
FAVORITE MARVEL ZOMBIE MOMENT: The opening scene of Marvel Zombies 2 is my current favorite. Sean (Phillips) really knocked that one out of the park.
WHICH MARVEL ZOMBIE WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE: Sleepwalker
IF YOU WERE A ZOMBIE, WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO EAT: Mayor McCheese... I'd make a crappy zombie.
THE NEW MUTANTS

ROBERT: (*Laughter.*) Yeah, he really bit her head off, didn't he?

SPOTLIGHT: That was definitely a moment where I knew this book was going to go further than I ever thought it would.

ROBERT: Again, it's one of those things I didn't think they'd let me do. It got to the point where I thought, "Surely they're not gonna let me do this!" So I would purposely sit down and try to think of things they would not let me do. I did that scene where Wolverine is slashing the Silver Surfer and his claws catch on the Surfer's metallic surface and the resistance causes his bones to rip out of his arm, and he has this dangling meat arm. They never asked me to change anything! It was kind of disappointing. With this second series, I've got to try and find something in another five issues they'll make me change.

SPOTLIGHT: One of the things you had to deal with in the story was that by the time your story began, just about everybody had already been either killed or turned into a zombie. You weren't able to deal with certain characters or events you may have wanted to include. Was it hard knowing you weren't going to be telling the story from a little earlier (that is until *Marvel Zombies: Dead Days*)?

ROBERT: I do this other zombie book, *The Walking Dead*, and it's very much everything that happens after the initial pandemonium of a zombie attack. That's the sort of thing that's in every zombie movie. I did *Dead Days*, and that has all the stuff you sort of expect to happen. The original series was cool because all of the important stuff is mentioned somewhere, so you don't really need to see it. I wasn't sitting there thinking that I wish I could show the Sentry spreading the virus or showing everybody trying to fight it off. I liked how we were forced to get to the meat of the story. I enjoyed it.

SPOTLIGHT: How did you find out "your" characters, the zombies, were going to appear in a crossover with Ash in *Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness*?

ROBERT: They had asked me to do the book originally, but I was working on *Ultimate X-Men* and I didn't really have a lot of time. I mean I'm a huge fan of *Army of Darkness*. I watched a VHS copy of that movie every night before I went to bed when I was in high school. I can almost quote the entire movie. I have, like, nine versions of every *Evil Dead* movie on DVD. I just didn't know how it would work and what I would do. I didn't think I could do it justice. I ended up turning down the project, but I was involved from the very beginning.

I was looking at John Layman's ideas and basically saying, "Yeah, that sounds cool." That was my consultant job. I think I had him change one thing because he had Luke Cage say something about enjoying being a zombie and I thought that we hadn't really established that. The whole original series was about how unhappy they are. But I think it's a cool idea for a crossover and it turned out to be another really good book. John Layman wrote a good story. We got to see Howard the Duck!

SPOTLIGHT: Going back to *Marvel Zombies: Dead Days*, was that one-shot a reaction to requests to see some of the stuff that was mentioned in the first series?

ROBERT: It was a reaction to me wanting to show some of the stuff that was mentioned. I liked being able to show how Mary Jane and Aunt May got eaten, and the Jarvis scene. We showed quite a bit in the Jarvis scene.

SPOTLIGHT: Yes. I was reminded recently while re-reading the book exactly how much was showing.

ROBERT: [illegible] there with me and keeping it out.

[illegible] because we took the Reed Zombie stuff because of the fan reaction and I wanted to do more because of the fan reaction. I don't think we were quite ready to do *Marvel Zombies 2*, so we came up with the idea of a one-shot, and I think I came up with the idea of doing a prequel. *Marvel Zombies* started right after the *Ultimate FF* and I liked the idea of something leading up to that.

SPOTLIGHT: With regard to Peter Parker eating not only Mary Jane but also his Aunt May (implied but not shown), I have to ask: Is it hard to look at yourself in the mirror?

ROBERT: (*Laughter.*) I [illegible] didn't actually show it!

PIGGING OUT: The Zombies consume mortal flesh in this effectively grossed out barrage of panels from Sean Phillips. (From *Marvel*

"IT GOT TO THE POINT WHERE I WOULD PURPOSELY SIT DOWN AND TRY TO THINK OF THINGS THEY WOULD NOT LET ME DO."
—Kirkman, having fun with Marvel editorial.

SPOTLIGHT: Right! You had her say, "I'll get the peroxide!"

ROBERT: That's what Aunt May would do right? "I'm back with the peroxide! Does anyone want any toast? OH NO!" (*Laughter.*)

I read some of the online comments and there were some complaints about Reed Richards acting out of character by embracing the virus. That was done mainly because Reed and the Zombie FF are clearly evil. They want into the Ultimate Universe to kill all those dudes and spread the virus. But in *Marvel Zombies* I kind of made a mistake and gave everyone their original Marvel personalities because I wanted people to see their humanity and wanted people to care about them somewhat. So when we did *Dead Days* I wanted to establish why the Fantastic Four acted the way they did in *Ultimate FF*, so Reed Richards is kind of a different guy. It shouldn't be considered out of character if you know the character's history from *Ultimate FF*. [illegible] take it [illegible] very seriously.

SPOTLIGHT: It was definitely interesting how you showed the characters (Reed notwithstanding) fighting the virus at first and being really ashamed of what the hunger was making them do.

ROBERT: And we see more of that in *Marvel Zombies 2*. A long time has passed. It's forty years in the future, and some of them still have that view — "I'm only doing this because of the hunger and this is all horrible" — but over time some of them have gotten used to it. That's kind of the premise of the sequel.

SPOTLIGHT: Another thing you mentioned in the introduction to the *Marvel Zombies HC* was that you initially didn't think you wanted to write *Marvel Zombies*. You are already closely identified with zombies thanks to your brilliant *Walking Dead* series at Image and said you didn't want to become the "zombie guy." You finally decided to do it, of course, but did that come into play in deciding to keep going? Are you still worried about being typecast as the "zombie guy"?

ROBERT: Now I'm the Zombie Guy. It's so well established that I write two zombie books that I didn't think continuing one of them would be too big a deal. I certainly would never do another zombie-related title. I just had so much fun with the first *Marvel Zombies* that I was kind of itching to get back into it. If Sean Phillips came to me to do a third *Marvel Zombies* series, I guess I'd do that one too because a lot of the appeal of doing *Marvel Zombies* is getting

DRAWING DEAD: Fusing zombie carnage with high humor in *Marvel Zombies #4*.

HOWARD THE YUCK: Ash's brains are on the menu in *Marvel Zombies vs. Army of Darkness*

"I WATCHED A VHS COPY OF *ARMY OF DARKNESS* EVERY NIGHT BEFORE I WENT TO BED WHEN I WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL."

—Kirkman, discussing the *MARVEL ZOMBIES* crossover with *ARMY OF DARKNESS*

to work with Sean Phillips who is amazing, and also getting those awesome Arthur Suydam covers. Working with that team is a big draw. If they were all coming back, there's no way I'd say no.

SPOTLIGHT: Speaking of Suydam covers, another fun thing about *Dead Days* was having a one-shot special to justify the big wraparound *X-Men #1* zombie cover.

ROBERT: It's very cool. I hear the original painting is like 5 feet by 3 feet.

SPOTLIGHT: He should have an exhibit at a big convention.

ROBERT: He really should.

SPOTLIGHT: You said you had some trouble coming up with the right story for the first series. Was the sequel story easier to come up with?

ROBERT: By comparison it was insanely easy because when I wrote *Marvel Zombies*, I came up with the cool Galactus ending which I think may be the best ending I've ever come up with. I was so excited by that I thought, "Man, I could do this next, and that next, and this could lead to that." I had tons of ideas by the end of *Marvel Zombies* for how things could continue and what could happen to the characters next. I'm kind of a serial guy, as far as writing goes. I'm not big on one-shots and limited series as much as I am on doing forty issues of something. So once I got going on stuff, it's hard to say, "Yeah, I'll just do five issues." I don't think I've done a limited series where I haven't thought about how I could have kept it going. So it was pretty easy for me to build on the *Marvel Zombies* story. In fact I wrote the first three pages to *Marvel Zombies 2 #1* and turned them in when I turned in *Marvel Zombies #5* because I knew exactly where everything was going. I was like, "Check this out guys! This is how the sequel's gonna start!" I had that bit with "I can't believe we ate the whole thing."

SPOTLIGHT: (*Laughter.*) It certainly does sound like you had the story ready to go.

ROBERT: I'm sitting there thinking, "So Hawkeye's head was severed but clearly the Wasp stayed alive after her head was severed and they didn't really do anything to Hawkeye's head after they cut it off. So somewhere in New York under the rubble from Magneto dropping the building on everyone, Hawkeye's head has been ... angling out! They don't die!"

SPOTLIGHT: Yeah, I read that. By the time this issue of *Marvel Spotlight* comes out the first issue of *Marvel Zombies 2* will be on the stands, but I have read the script.

ROBERT: Oh? What did you think?

SPOTLIGHT: Oh, man. Great stuff. These stories still manage to be fun and shocking.

ROBERT: It's a little bit darker. Black Panther being nearly murdered and accepting the change as the only way to save himself, and thus his community.

SPOTLIGHT: Bits of Thanos' head floating in space and everyone shooing it out of their face as they talk.

ROBERT: (*Laughter.*) And Ego the Living Planet, huh?

SPOTLIGHT: It's amazing how even after everything that's happened, I can still not believe my eyes, even reading just the script without the art. But it's the fact that it's also fun that makes it more shocking! If the only point were horror, it probably wouldn't have the same effect.

ROBERT: I'm glad you like it. This is the first feedback I've gotten that hasn't been from Sean or the editors. And Sean just said, "Yeah, I'm working on it."

SPOTLIGHT: So in this first issue, the zombies are headed back to Earth to try to put together a new transporter to take them to other dimensions to feed. I guess the crux of the story covers their efforts?

ROBERT: Yeah, that's the main plot.

SPOTLIGHT: But first of all, there's a small resistance group on Earth.

ROBERT: Yeah. Black Panther has formed a little civilization and he's taken in the Acolytes, and people have coupled and they've had children who have grown and had their own kids. So there's a little pocket of civilization centered around where Asteroid M came down to Earth in the first series. There's conflicts there where the Acolytes and Panther's people have formed two different factions and are fighting for control of the community. Then the Marvel Zombies are gonna come and mess that up.

But what's cool is, like I said earlier, some of the zombies have gotten used to the hunger and have accepted it as part of their personality over the last forty years. They don't feel bad about doing what they're doing. But others are still horrified. Getting back to Earth and seeing human life is still there will kind of spark that. So what we're gonna end up with is Marvel Zombie Vs. Marvel Zombie. We're gonna have our own mini Civil War. "Whose Stomach Are You In?" will be our tagline.

SPOTLIGHT: (*Laughter.*) Another important thing you establish is that over time if a zombie does not feed, then the hunger starts to fade so that, for example, the Wasp has become part of Black Panther's community.

ROBERT: Yeah. Once you get past the initial hunger – and it's very painful for a while – it either goes away or you get used to it and you can function like you did before you were a Marvel Zombie. You're pretty much immortal at that point. These characters haven't aged in forty years.

SPOTLIGHT: Is there something about the hunger subsiding that is a plot point? Is there a reason behind it that factors into what happens?

ROBERT: It's mostly a continuation of what Reed Richards talked about in *Dead Days*. This could be seen like an evolution in the human race. They are becoming a more efficient species. Essentially if everyone became a zombie and just chilled out, they'd all be dead and smelly but they'd all still be who they were, but they wouldn't have to eat and they wouldn't age.

It comes into play a little bit in *Marvel Zombies 2* #1. Black Panther is getting old and his son is already dead. The Acolytes are using his age against him as they wrestle for power. The solution he comes up with is allowing the Wasp to zombiefy him. Once he gets over the hunger, he won't age and he'll basically be who he was, but won't be able to die.

SPOTLIGHT: Any other teases for *Marvel Zombies 2*?

ROBERT: Hawkeye is not the only Marvel Zombie to return from the first series! And…there's a lot of fighting. And I swear I will come up with something they're gonna make me change!

Sounds like an admirable goal! See kids, just like Robert Kirkman, when you put your mind to it, you can achieve anything! Thanks to comics greatest Zombie Guy for the entertaining interview. MARVEL ZOMBIES 2 begins shipping monthly this very month of October.

UNDEAD

SEAN PHILLIPS RETURNS FOR MORE ZOMBIE ACTION!

In *MARVEL ZOMBIES*, Robert Kirkman may set the table, but it's artist Sean Phillips who delivers the main course. *SPOTLIGHT* says it's time to feast!

BY DUGAN TRODGLEN

Brit artist Sean Phillips has worked in comics for nearly twenty years, mostly in his native country with U.K. titles like *2000AD*. He has spent much of his career in American comics working with dark topics and seems especially at home in the crime genre, a which he has collaborated several times with writer Ed Brubaker. Their most recent work together is the creator-owned *Criminal* courtesy of Marvel's ICON imprint. Although his work has more than a taste of the macabre to it, and can be quite brutal, Sean has always kept his toe in the world of super heroes. He has drawn several books that exist in the world of super heroes but manage to not exactly be super-hero books (*Black Widow*, *Sleeper*, *WildCATS*, *Marvel Zombies*) and this aesthetic perfectly, featuring brightly clad characters who are no longer super heroes but instead hungry, horrific engines of destruction and mayhem. *Spotlight* talked with Sean about drawing this disgusting yet fun-filled world.

SPOTLIGHT: It's relatively rare to avoid super hero work when you're a comic book artist, but you have managed to draw a lot of comics that exist in that world without the books actually being precisely super-hero comics. Is this intentional? How much do you try to avoid super heroes, or how much do you try to stay tied to them?

SEAN PHILLIPS: I draw every kind of comic but super heroes for the first fifteen years of my career, mostly comics in the U.K. but also a lot of books for Vertigo. Up until drawing *Batma* in 1998, no one had asked me to draw super heroes before. I grew up reading them and always wanted to draw them but I'd been pigeonholed as a Vertigo artist. Nowadays I seem to be offered the darker super-hero stuff more often than any of the lighter-hearted ones anyway.

PHILLIPS PARODY: Painted zombie parody of classic cover to *Avengers #28*, featuring Giant-Man and the erstwhile Kooky Quartet, for a sketchbook Sean Phillips' art dealer put together. Copies of the art are available from www.splashpageart.com

"I GOT A NO-PRIZE FOR... 'MOST DISGUSTING PICTURE OF WOLVERINE EVER.'"

–Artist Sean Phillips

SPOTLIGHT: You've done a limited series, a one-shot, and now a second limited series. You must be having a lot of fun with it. What appeals to you the most about drawing these books?

SEAN: It's a concept that is so out there that it makes it fun reading, even if they are zombies.

SPOTLIGHT: What was it like getting the first script? Did any of the contents shock you? I mean, will Marvel really going to publish this?

SEAN: Compared to some books I've drawn for Vertigo, Marvel Zombies is quite tame. It is a comedy after all.

SPOTLIGHT: Marvel Zombies is chock full of big moments. For instance, Wolverine ripping the skin off of his arm while attacking the Silver Surfer is quite a memorable image. Was that difficult to produce?

SEAN: No more difficult than anything else in the book. I got a No-Prize for that page: "Most Disgusting Picture of Wolverine Ever."

SPOTLIGHT: Even more momentous for me was the panel of the zombies gathered around what was left of the Surfer eating him.

SEAN: I just imagined him as a big bag of meat.

SPOTLIGHT: The series balances the horror with a real sense of fun and humor. What, if anything, did you do in your art to balance these aspects?

SEAN: I played it straight. The humor had to be situations; I didn't want to try and draw "funny" to belabor that. The characters don't think what they're doing is funny.

SPOTLIGHT: Do you have a favorite character to draw as a zombie?

SEAN: Hulk, definitely!

SPOTLIGHT: *Dead Days* kind of blew down the carnage and in fact roasted a very sacred cow by having Spider-Man eat Mary Jane. Was having Mary Jane slightly off-panel to help ease the blow or was it to actually make it more terrifying?

SEAN: It would have [illegible] to show that.

SPOTLIGHT: Were you an Avengers fan growing up? I'm sure you are. If so, what was it like drawing "Jarvis meat"? That is a very explicit panel, but the thing that really jumps out is how serene Jarvis' face looks. It's kind of like that classic book *The Giving Tree*: even in death Jarvis finds one more way to serve his beloved Avengers.

SEAN: I loved the Avengers, especially the first few years. Jarvis was loyal to his employers until the end.

SEAN PHILLIPS

CURRENTLY DRAWING: *Marvel Zombies 2*, *Criminal*
ZOMBIE CRED: *Marvel Zombies* #1-5
Marvel Zombies Army of Darkness #4-5
Dead Days one shot, *Marvel Zombies 2* #1-5
FAVORITE ZOMBIE MOVIE: *Shaun of the Dead*
FAVORITE SUYDAM ZOMBIE COVER:
Marvel Zombies HC fifth printing featuring *Mary Jane* #2
FAVORITE MARVEL ZOMBIE MOMENT:
Getting that royalty check
WHICH MARVEL ZOMBIE WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE:
Hawkeye
IF YOU WERE A ZOMBIE, WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO EAT:
No one
I'm a vegetarian!

SPOTLIGHT: Since we're here, plug your creator-owned book with Ed Brubaker, *Criminal*, published by the Marvel Icon imprint. Tell some folks who may be reading this but unfamiliar with *Criminal* why they should try out this awesome crime comic.

SEAN: It's better than *Marvel Zombies*! Better than Ed's other books too!

Okay, okay, calm down, Sean! Look for Sean Phillips' not-so-syrupy-sweet art in MARVEL ZOMBIES 2 as well as CRIMINAL.

LIFE AMONG THE ZOMBIES

REGINALD HUDLIN BRAVES THE FLESH-EATERS

BY DUGAN TRODGLEN

The Marvel Zombies had their first crossover with the Marvel Universe in *Black Panther* by Reginald Hudlin and Francis Portela, a brisk and fun (as fun as flesh-eating fare can be) escapade that finds the Panther-led FF breathlessly racing through space surrounded on all sides by Skrulls and Marvel Zombies. Adorned with some sweet Arthur Suydam covers, these issues of *Black Panther* are a crossover in which horror and hilarity ensue. But that's life among the Zombies, ain't it?

The writer of Black Panther is Reginald Hudlin, a man folks call a "heavy hitter" in the world of entertainment. He is President of Programming at BET (Black Entertainment Television) and has directed several high-profile movies, including *Boomerang*, *House Party*, and *The Ladies' Man*. He has always loved comics, however, and when Marvel wanted to firmly establish the Black Panther as a "heavy hitter" in the Marvel Universe, they turned to Reginald. He leapt at the chance like the book's title character, relaunching *Black Panther* in 2005 alongside the inimitable John Romita, Jr. His run has been controversial, eclectic, funny, and never boring.

YUCKING IT UP: Hudlin's Zombie escapades include teeth-picking, Skrull chomping, and head-patting.

He made his biggest splash by marrying the Panther and classic X-Woman Storm. T'Challa and Ororo's wedding was a monster event in the Marvel Universe and the two have gone on to replace Reed Richards and Sue Storm in the Fantastic Four (albeit temporarily). Marvel Spotlight checked in with Reginald to catch up on his most recent story leading the Panther-led FF into the world of the Marvel Zombies!

SPOTLIGHT: When and how did you get the idea to send T'Challa's FF to the Zombie-verse?

REGINALD: Once we got the go-ahead for Black Panther and Storm to head up the FF, then I knew we needed *big* villains. Originally I wanted Dr. Doom, of course, and had set up a preliminary bout with Panther, Storm and Doom after the wedding. But when Doom was not available, I thought about using the baddest villains in the game today: the Marvel Zombies.

SPOTLIGHT: What appealed to you about visiting that world (other than getting some awesome Arthur Suydam *Black Panther* covers!)?

REGINALD: Loved the Zombies. Loved them when Millar created them; thought they were the most brilliant recreation of The Frightful Four imaginable, and loved the tragicomedy of Kirkman's *Marvel Zombies* series. Since this was a new incarnation of the Fantastic Four, I thought it would be cool to fight a zombie version of the originals.

I ended up using Skrull versions of the Zombie FF since there is a sequel in the works and I didn't want to jam up those plans, but I still had hella fun. Having the T'Challa's of two worlds talk was a fun moment, very Silver Age Gardner Fox.

SPOTLIGHT: You obviously have a good handle on Luke Cage based on your previous use of him. What was it like writing this version of him?

REGINALD: I have always loved Luke Cage. I bought the first issue on the newsstands, and I'm so glad he's now a

REGINALD HUDLIN
REGINALD HUDLIN
CURRENTLY WRITING:
Black Panther
ZOMBIE CRED:
Black Panther #27 30
FAVORITE ZOMBIE MOVIE:
28 Days Later, with the remake of Dawn of the Dead a great bookend two great reinventions of the genre
FAVORITE SUYDAM ZOMBIE COVER: Marvel Zombies #2. I love the ones he did for me, but if I had to pick a favorite every time I see that nest of birds popping out of Cap's head, I just crack up
FAVORITE COVER NOT YET ZOMBIEFIED: Fantastic Four Annual #3 (the wedding of Reed and Sue)
FAVORITE MARVEL ZOMBIE MOMENT: The reveal in Ultimate Fantastic Four. Best misdirect in years
WHICH MARVEL ZOMBIE WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO BE: Nah, man I'm Panther. I'm surviving
IF YOU WERE A ZOMBIE, WHO WOULD YOU MOST WANT TO EAT: Like I said, since I'm a survivor I'd be busy repopulating the planet A smarter, better-looking world
Fantastic Four

player in the Marvel Universe. I grew up in a very tough town called East St. Louis, two doors down from where Ike (Turner) met Tina, and after college lived in Harlem for years, so I've known my fair share of bad asses. Some of my best friends are bad asses, in fact. So Cage is easy to write for. Zombie Cage is easy: just remove that little moral compass that makes him a hero, then he becomes ruthless, relentless, and completely dangerous.

My editor Axel Alonso joked that he wanted me to write a Zombie Cage ongoing. I would write a Cage ongoing if I had the time and the character was available.

SPOTLIGHT: Your story really has the over-the-top feel of Jack Kirby's '70s *Black Panther* run. Was this a conscious choice, and was this why the King Solomon's Frog was part of the story?

REGINALD: I'm a fan of every era of Jack Kirby, including his second run at Marvel. I wasn't trying to evoke those stories, but just keep the scale of the action big enough to justify the full efforts the Fantastic Four, which are a very powerful group. Zombie Galactii are inherently absurd, even for comics, so it gets pretty broad pretty quickly.

I like changing tones from arc to arc. It allows me to grow as a writer and makes the book unpredictable. After a lot of heavy politics in Civil War, I thought doing a more comedic adventure might be a good change of pace.

I've always thought the Frogs were a great device and underused, so when Dwayne and I first talked about doing the BP and Storm led FF, I said I wanted to bring the Frogs into the story. He found a great excuse to bring them into use, and I kept wanting to extend the concept, which is how unpredictable "magic" is... especially in a crisis situation.

SPOTLIGHT: Is it tricky to avoid shifting into full-on comedy mode when writing the zombies?

REGINALD: Well, they are eating people, which is horrible. You have to maintain a certain level of gravity to keep the threat going, which in turn sets up the comedy.

SPOTLIGHT: As the Panther asks while trying to defeat a Mr. Fantastic/Skrull/Zombie, we have to know: How do you...dismember...an elastic...zombie?!?

REGINALD: A challenge so difficult even T'Challa didn't have a solution!

Many thanks to the busy Mr. Hudlin for taking the time to answer these questions. Be sure and read the continuing adventures of BLACK PANTHER every month, and make sure you check out BLACK PANTHER: CIVIL WAR TPB for the full run of T'Challa and Storm tales from the CW!

SKRULL SNACKS: It's okay to laugh! It's only Skrulls being eaten! (Art from *BP* #28.)

THE CRAZY
OF
ARTH

WORLD
UR SUYDAM

Spotlight Covers the Zombie Cover King

BY JOHN RHETT THOMAS

How to tie together the French and Indian War, Bruce Springsteen, the luminist art period, and flesh-eating Zombies? Two words: Arthur Suydam.

It seems to clear to this writer that the irreverent insanity of Robert Kirkman and Sean Phillips' series would have eventually found an audience. But what size? To bridge the gap from having *Marvel Zombies* stand as a mere cult classic with acceptable sales to being something with a more widespread penetrance with Marvel readership, they needed a little something extra. They needed a cover concept to get people in the door, something to help prospective buyers overcome the very natural revulsion most normal people feel when told a comic contains stuff like Giant-Man literally lunching on his pal the Black Panther!

They had the concept: parody classic Marvel comics covers by replacing the familiar elements with zombie gore. But just as key as the concept was the artist. They needed someone who had an inherent love for the covers of old, someone who could retain the formal compositions of the original pieces but take them to new places of horror fantasy, to weave in textures that would be alternately loving and irreverent, someone whose illustration credentials would deliver all that and more.

Marvel got the artist: Arthur Suydam. And this move helped seal the kind of deal nobody could have foretold: *Marvel Zombies* was set to become the kind of barnstorming sales juggernaut rarely seen in the comics scene.

Flash forward to 2007, and Arthur Suydam is a smash sensation on the convention circuit. While this interview was conducted at DragonCon in Atlanta, hordes of fans – many of them dressed as the Zombies inspired by Suydam's peerless paintings – waited in line to get a sketch from one of the hottest illustrators in comic and fantasy art today. Belying any impressions one might have that an artist so good at delivering the gritty, gothic gore of the Marvel Zombies would be a similarly dark, twisted fellow, Arthur proved to be as sunny, friendly and outgoing as they come. Delving into the historic artistic legacy of his family name, his career as a professional musician and his love and respect for what the Marvel Zombies have done for him and his growth as an artist, Arthur delivered a fine interview that *Spotlight* is happy to bring you in this special issue

SUYDAM IN HIS STUDIO: Keeping up with the schedule of new Zombie covers keeps the painter very busy in his New York studio!

SPOTLIGHT: Can you give clarification for everyone on the pronunciation of your last name? I think a lot of people like to say SY-dum.

ARTHUR: Soo-DAM!

SPOTLIGHT: Soo-DAM. Emphasis on DAM. *(Turns to line of autograph seekers.)* Everybody got that? Soo-DAM!

ARTHUR: They don't look impressed. *(Laughter.)*

SPOTLIGHT: They're like, "Just sign my book!" So the name Suydam is Dutch?

ARTHUR: It's Dutch, that's correct.

SPOTLIGHT: And you come from a long line of Dutch settlers in New York that goes back to the 1600s – that's further back than most people can take their heritage as settlers in the New World!

ARTHUR: Pre-America actually.

SPOTLIGHT: Right. How much of your family history are you aware of that has been really fleshed out, where all the parts of the family tree are put together?

ARTHUR: I know a little about it. My aunt is the one who is really in the know. They showed up early on and eventually spread out to local small hubs of civilization, like Pennington and Lambertville.

SPOTLIGHT: It was a Suydam that settled the area and the Suydam name has stayed on.

ARTHUR: Them and others. They came over from Holland and fought in the Indian wars on the Hudson River. This was all pre-New York. They became farmers and landowners in what became New Amsterdam and then, later on, New York.

SPOTLIGHT: I am told that there are a couple of streets here named Suydam.

ARTHUR: Two in Brooklyn and one in New Brunswick, I hear. This used to be a fairly Dutch area. After the wars, there were no women, so some of them found native brides. There are a lot of Dutch and Blackfoot Indian combinations in the Suydam family. My little brother, James, married a Blackfoot girl.

SPOTLIGHT: I'm curious how much of that legacy influences what you do today? Are there specific parts of it or is it perhaps the whole continuum of this legacy that's hundreds of years old that influence who you are and what you stand for?

ARTHUR: It's actually something that I don't give much thought to. On Sundays my Aunt Alice and the elders would drink beer and talk politics and family affairs at Pop-Pop's farm, while my brothers and I hid under the table. We were too young to take an interest.

Later on I was approached by art collectors who were beginning to collect my work, some of whom also collected the paintings of some of my great uncles, who were mostly Hudson River painters. That kind of started the ball rolling. Over the years, little by little, you begin to become a little more aware.

SPOTLIGHT: Upon reading a little bit about your uncles and some of your family tree from the distant past, it seems that your family was full of some high achievers, in almost a Renaissance

"Set the bar high. When you reach your goals, set them again — never stop. Set them high and far from reach"

- Arnold Schwarzenegger

man fashion. For instance, your great-uncle James was a merchant and a world traveler. He was a successful businessman, extremely well educated and his artistic talent was obvious.

ARTHUR: He had a lot to do with The National Academy Museum here in NYC. He got started quite late in life with his art, after he had already achieved some degree of success in science, business and education. I believe it was the logical next step; get the essentials taken care of, then focus on the really important things: self-development and the arts. I think it was more of a philosophical thing than anything else; one life to spend and how to best spend it.

SPOTLIGHT: Do you think that overachievement is in your genes?

ARTHUR: I think that subject raises more questions than answers for me, really. I'm not sure that I can speak authoritatively for anyone other than myself. I was taught from an early age that there are areas in life a man must master to be well-rounded. You had to know science, you had to be fluent in all major sports and excel in at least one, you had to be versed in multiple musical instruments and master at least one, know how to dance the five basic social dances, support charity, be able to fight, speak more than one language and have a vested interest in and experience in the arts, in general. I'm just learning as I go, really. Recently I discovered that the street where I've resided for the past 32 years is on the same block where my Uncle James lived in the 1800s – in downtown east New York City.

SPOTLIGHT: All happenstance.

ARTHUR: Some coincidence. On the subject of being overachievers, I don't know about that. I think it comes down to a game plan for life. Set the bar high. When you reach your goals, set them again – never stop. Set them high and far from reach. Don't waste your time with TV except as a learning tool. We were raised to believe that everyone can achieve their goals with an investment of time and focus.

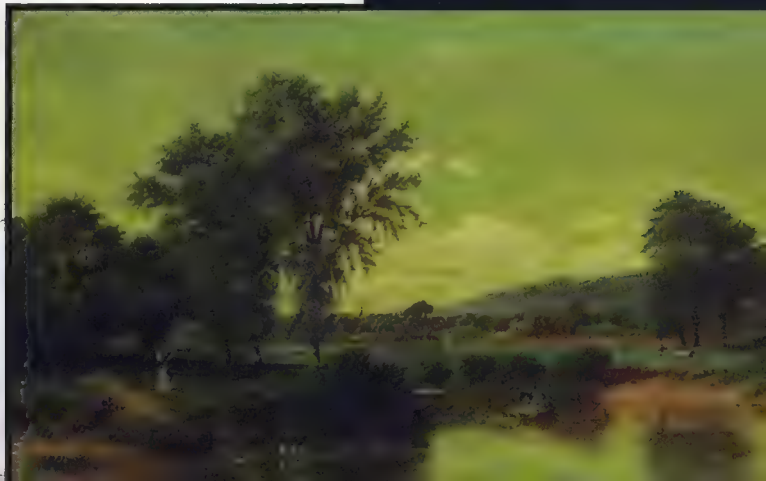
HUDSON RIVER PAINTING:

A Legacy of Suydam Art

In the years directly preceding the Civil War, Arthur's great-uncle James Augustus Suydam, along with his peers in the Hudson River School of painting, elevated American art to a new level of respect and accomplishment through a form later named luminism. An erstwhile lawyer, merchant, and architect, James A. Suydam's lust for artistic expression led him to canvas the landscapes of his Hudson River environs and express their lush geographies with washes of color and light.

"With the European artists taking precedence in the fine art world, those luminist paintings are the ones that brought American fine artists their first recognition," instructs descendant Arthur Suydam. And it's easy to see why, as the gorgeous, sensitively rendered depictions of the American landscapes carried an optimism and sense of hope that had to have resonated with Americans getting steeled for, and consequently living through, the din and horror of the American Civil War.

Just as this issue of *Spotlight* goes to press, The Hyde Collection in upstate New York has wrapped up a yearlong exhibit titled "Luminist Horizons: The Art and Collection of James A. Suydam." But a newly published book by the same name collects over 200 reproductions of Suydam's landscapes and is worth checking out to enhance your appreciation for the artistic gifts of the Suydam name!



SPINS A WEB, ANY SIZE? Arthur yuks it up for some Zombie cover photo reference in this admittedly ridiculous Spidey costume!

For me, there was the additional catch-up element to deal with after I was badly burned at age five. They didn't expect me to live. I had to learn to walk again and had to play catch up for years.

SPOTLIGHT: Yeah, it's interesting that a lot of the same echoes from the past seem to reappear in your life. You know, you, in a way, can be considered a Renaissance type personality in that you're obviously a successful musician, a successful artist, you've got your hands busy in many disciplines. You have the option to do a bunch of different things, but right now you're heavily involved in illustration. Tying that in to your family history is a very interesting thing.

ARTHUR: I started drawing and writing when I was about four years old. Many of my uncles and aunts are artists and musicians. Pop-pop played about five or six different instruments. My father was mostly a singer and guitar player.

I think that I picked up my love of music from listening to him play at night over the years. I started playing professionally when I was about 14 years old in the clubs.

SPOTLIGHT: Let's talk about that part of your artistic career. Tell me how you got started with your professional music career.

ARTHUR: I was singing in Baptist churches when I was kid. I went right from that to playing in bars in Jersey. They had to sneak me in because I was under age. It started with going to jam sessions in bars. Then once I moved to New York City I had my own bands, and was hired to do film soundtracks and was performing in multiple bands; I'd be in two, three, or four bands at the a time. When I came to New York, soon there was this rockabilly explosion, which is kind of what I do, American roots music. That came in vogue when the Stray Cats hit. I would draw during the day and was playing the clubs at night: the Lone Star Café, all the clubs that specialize in that Americana music, four, five, six nights a week.

Eventually it got around that I was the guy to go to for that kind of music. There were lots of very good players with me at the time, from Paul McCartney's band, Brian Setzer's band, the horn section from the Rolling Stones, the rhythm section from Steely Dan, Joe Cocker and a host of others. It was a good time musically.

SPOTLIGHT : I don't think a lot of your comic art fans are aware of that side of your artistic career. Obviously everyone knows you now through the zombie prism. When you were playing music professionally, did you stick pretty much in New York City or did you play around elsewhere?

ARTHUR: Well, I went out on the road a bit, mostly national tours, with a few international things thrown in. I did tours with Bill Hailey's Comets as musical director and followed that with Tony Williams and the Platters.

SPOTLIGHT: Were you the musical director for the Platters during this time?

ARTHUR: No, not for that band. That was Ray, from Roberta Flack's band. I functioned primarily as the warm-up group and guitar player. Because I had my own full group in the city, it worked out well because the Platters were always late for whatever gig they were booked for; at least an hour, two hours, sometimes three hours late. So that meant that they needed a complete rhythm section with vocalist who could arrive on time to cover their butts and give them time to find their way to the

WORKING FOR THE BOSS: Backing up Bruce Springsteen at a house party is more fun than work! Arthur's band, the Gotham Playboys, toured the world and won a Grammy with Bruce on his 2006 album, "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions."

"It became a thing that we would do every year: go down and do this big jam at Bruce's place."

Sessions at the Ranch, the Gotham Playboys, and his budding relationship with Bruce Springsteen

gig. I actually got a movie deal out of it on one occasion, when I was covering for them one night and a movie producer was out in the audience and caught the act.

SPOTLIGHT: You got to buy them some time. *(Laughter.)* I'd like to talk about how you got involved with a group of musicians that would later turn into a working relationship with Bruce Springsteen. Was your band called the Gotham Playboys?

ARTHUR: The Gotham Playboys, that's correct. In New York, you get to play with many bands. As many bands as you can hook up with. That particular band happens to be a Cajun zydeco band. In that band I sing in English and French. It's mostly a roadhouse band. Pre-Giuliani there was a very vibrant and active club scene in New York City. That's just not the case now following his "quality of life" program to do away with all the noise, including the noise that all the musicians were making. Prior to my working with the band, there was a singer with the band who happened to be best friends with Patty Scialfa, who eventually became "Mrs. Bruce."

SPOTLIGHT: That would be Soozie Tyrell, right?

ARTHUR: Yeah, Soozie, Patti and Lisa (Lowell); the Three Redheads, we called them. They had a band together way back and had been struggling to make a go of it in the city scene. At some point Soozie left the band and I stepped in replacing her as lead vocalist.

Now incidentally, Bruce Springsteen wanted a band to play his birthday party one year out on his farm so we ended up doing the gig and the thing turned into this huge jam session with all the musicians, all the guests getting up on stage. We played from about 12 in the afternoon to about 11 or 12 at night. It was so much fun that it became a thing that we would do every year: go down and do this big jam at Bruce's place. We performed our own shows and the band operated as the rhythm section backing everyone else up.

SPOTLIGHT: Down in New Jersey?

ARTHUR: At his Jersey ranch house, yes. We would hear how well people thought he sounded with us backing him up. That turned into the band he used to record a tribute to Pete Seeger on a tribute record [1998's "Where Have All The Flowers Gone" cd] and then later with the "We Shall Overcome: The Seeger Sessions" CD and "Live in Dublin" CD/DVD.

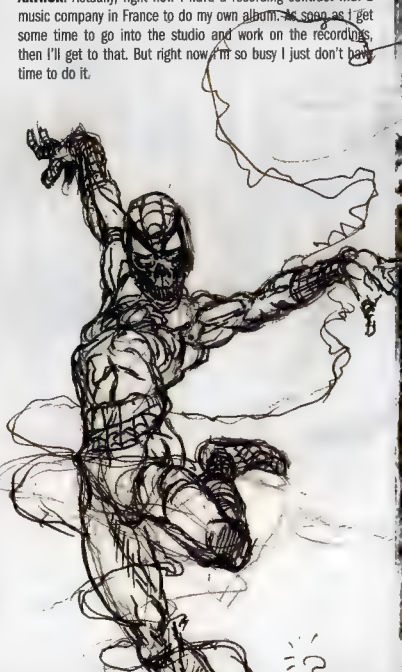
SPOTLIGHT: The Gotham Playboys also embarked on a worldwide tour, won a Grammy for the album – all cool things. You didn't get to partake in that thanks to the crazy success of Marvel Zombies and the positive effect that had on your art career.

ARTHUR: I was happy with my work. When the subject of doing the CDs and the tour came up, I kind of just backed away from the whole thing. I had already done a lot of roadwork and had been burned back home as a result. One of the things about going on the road, you come back and all your jobs have dried up and you have to start all over again. Mostly because they find somebody else to replace you; that is the lesson I learned over the years when I was going to go mainstream in years past. So while on one hand, it sounded like a fun gig, I was quite content to focus on the Zombie project that was just getting started and hadn't come out yet.

Also, aesthetically speaking, musically I double up with Bruce pretty well; we do much the same thing so that job wasn't a match for me. I'm mostly hired as a singer/guitar player. There just wasn't a real clear spot for me on that particular job, so I have no regrets about it. He got his Grammy for best folk record, I got the Spike award for best comic of the year. The rhythm section got paid well for a world trip, now it's back to the drawing board. I'm comfortable with my decision to stick to my guns. I've always felt that I was born to work on Marvel's mainstream characters – fate and circumstance dictated that it would take us a while to get there. I believe that I can write these characters as well as I draw them – better. I've always seen myself working for Marvel – all the way back when I was a four year old.

SPOTLIGHT: Do you have any projects in mind though, musically?

ARTHUR: Actually, right now I have a recording contract with a music company in France to do my own album. As soon as I get some time to go into the studio and work on the recordings, then I'll get to that. But right now, I'm so busy I just don't have time to do it.



ZOMBIE SPIDEY SKETCH: An example of Arthur Suydam's hyper-creative sketch art combining Marvel super heroes and zombiefication!

A LIFE IN MUSIC: Promo shots from Arthur's career in music from over the decades.

SPOTLIGHT: What shape will that album take creatively?

ARTHUR: It'll probably be the thing that I do, which is American roots music. That's what I like – all original tunes.

SPOTLIGHT: Whatever you do in that vein, I'm sure it will have to fit in with your comics schedule. *Marvel Zombies* has been a breakout phenomenon.

ARTHUR: Nobody expected it to go anywhere.

SPOTLIGHT: It bears mentioning that when you came on to this project, it's not like it was an afterthought. It wasn't just some throwaway. But at the same time, nobody anticipated it would become the brilliant success that it's been. At what point did you get this sense that you were part of something that was going to be really special?

ARTHUR: I thought it before the project ever got started. As soon as I heard the concept of *Marvel Zombies*, I thought it was such a good, high-concept idea, that basically if the writer turned in anything that resembled a good story, it was gonna be a big thing. As soon as I heard about it I thought to myself, this is what comics have been missing all along, rather than a different wrinkle on an age-old template.

SPOTLIGHT: What elements stood out that made you think that way?

ARTHUR: Taking characters that everybody knows and loves and have been around. Iconic characters. And doing the kind of things with them that we've been waiting to see happen for as long as we've been reading comics. There's always been a line over which the mainstream has been reluctant to cross when it came to storytelling and fooling around with the characters and letting the creative end of the comic world take some liberties. I thought *Dark Knight Returns* was the first time where they really gave the talent an opportunity to be progressive with these well-known characters. *Marvel Zombies* is the second. It just goes to show what can be done when you choose a good team and let them run with the ball.

SPOTLIGHT: Where in the process did it come to be that the covers were going to be an integral part of the whole Zombies enterprise?

ARTHUR: They had a writer. I don't know at what point they found the artist, but at some point very early on they came to me with the idea of doing the covers. I had a lot of samples of dark stuff that I could show them to prove I could paint that type of thing. The rest is history.

The idea for redos on the covers came internally from Marvel. That's one of the things that made me interested in the project. I owned all of these comic books and I read them all and those were some of my favorite comics of all time, and as soon as I heard that they wanted to do parodies of these old classic covers, it felt almost like I was getting to work on the original books. That was one of the things that instilled my interest in the project.

SPOTLIGHT: I'm sure you were immediately ticking off the covers you wanted to do in your mind: "Well, I wanna do this one, I wanna do that one, I wanna do this one." Did that kind of excitement and possibility keep you up at night?

ARTHUR: Yes. I had a long list starting out and I still have a long list. It's a very long list of all the covers I want to do, in the order I want to do them. And as they appear, one by one, I'm chipping away at them.

Expect Arthur Suydam to keep chipping away at that list for a while! There are plenty more classic covers that will get his distinct brand of storytelling transformations. Look for his work on future issues of MARVEL ZOMBIES 2 and other Marvel titles, plus make space on your shelf for MARVEL ZOMBIES: THE COVERS HC, which includes extensive commentary from Arthur on a helping heaping of his classic Zombie covers

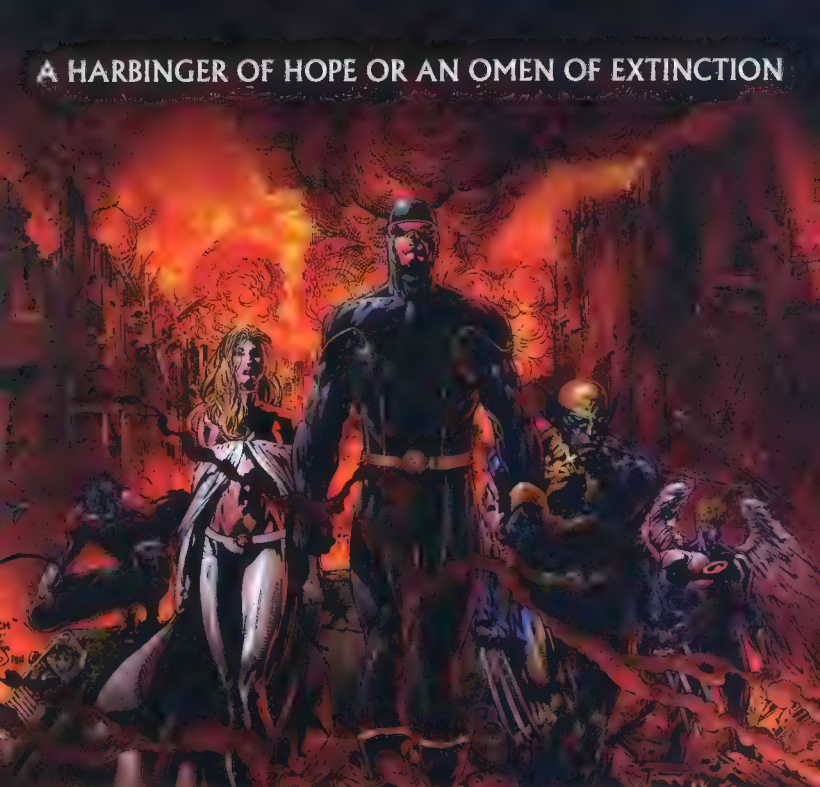
MARVEL ZOMBIES: THE COVERS HC:

The Art of the Homage

The easy way for Arthur to have approached these homages would have been to do a literal rendering of the characters on the cover into a zombie form and just let it go at that, but Arthur pursued more artistic choices than merely doing that. All his Zombie covers are marked with clever strokes that move the final product past the realm of remake rehash and the simple iconography of pinups and into the realm of honest to goodness storytelling.

In MARVEL ZOMBIES: THE COVERS HC, in stores now, Arthur provides commentary on many of these storytelling choices and takes you inside his creative mind: the challenges of laying out the covers, adding depth and texture to his new renditions, and looking for places to hang his storytelling hat. This beautiful art book should satisfy the sweet tooth – or should I say "meat tooth" – of any Zombie fan.

A HARBINGER OF HOPE OR AN OMEN OF EXTINCTION



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recapturing the MAGIK!

MARVEL *SPOTLIGHT* TALKS WITH *NEW X-MEN*'S CHRIS YOST ABOUT LIFE, DEATH, AND THE RESURRECTION OF ILLYANA RASPUTIN

by Jeph York

I REMEMBER. I REMEMBER MY LIFE WITH PIOTR, THEN COMING TO THE SCHOOL. BELASCO, THE X-MEN, THE NEW MUTANTS...I REMEMBER THE DARK TIMES...THE INFERNO.
THEN NOTHING.

DARK MEMORIES: A life sundered by evil and blacked out by Belasco, Magik shares her fate with the New X-Men. (From *New X-Men #40.*)

All right, *Spotlight* faithful – raise your hands if you remember Magik! Yep, that's right, we're talking Illyana Rasputin, kid sister of the X-Men's Colossus, who was kidnapped as a child by the evil demon Belasco and tutored in the black arts for seven years – then returned from Limbo as a sword-wielding, butt-kicking, teleporting blonde bombshell with a bone-chilling dark side and an army of demons! Magik was a particular favorite of the *Spotlight* editorial crew in the mid-'80s… and judging by the number of hands raised just now, we're obviously not alone!

Magik's ongoing character arc, her struggle between her human and demonic sides, ran its course during 1989's *Inferno* storyline, when after a near-complete descent into madness and evil she was transformed back into the innocent young girl that she was before Belasco took her. The child Illyana returned to Russia to live with her family — essentially written out of the book — and although she was brought back briefly in 1993, it was only to tragically die as the first victim of the Legacy Virus. But even though Magik has been gone for almost twenty years, and Illyana has been dead for nearly fifteen, that hasn't stopped the legions of New Mutants and X-Men fans from remembering her as one of their all-time favorite characters. It seems like every reader from the 1980s has a soft spot for Illyana, and even later writers and artists on the X-books write love letters to the character or tease Magik's return on a semi-regular basis. (Two recent examples that come to mind are the bittersweet Magik flashback story in *X-Men Unlimited (Vol. 2) #14*, and her appearance in the House of M reality in *New X-Men: Academy X #16-19*.)

Long-suffering Magik fans got a double whammy this summer, as Illyana came from out of nowhere to appear in two projects at once – not only did she headline the *Mystic Arcana: Magik* one-shot with a flashback tale to an untold adventure from her past, but in a long-awaited yet unexpected twist, she was brought back from the dead – magically, of course – in *New X-Men #37-41*!

Spotlight sat down with Chris Yost, old-school X-Men fan and one-half of the writing team on *New X-Men*, to chat for a bit about the whys and wherefores of how he and partner Craig Kyle brought Illyana Rasputin back from the dead…

THE DOMINION OF BELASCO: Ruling the land of Limbo…but for how much longer? And who might replace him? Ahh… you should be reading *New X-Men*! (Art from *New X-Men* #37.)

SPOTLIGHT: Thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedule, Chris.

CHRIS: Glad to help!

SPOTLIGHT: All right, first off let's establish your street cred. Were you a fan of the character in the old *New Mutants* book? Did you read Magik's adventures growing up?

CHRIS: Absolutely. The original *New Mutants* series was must-read stuff. Loved Magik, and Craig and I are glad to be able to help her back into the land of the living.

SPOTLIGHT: Big fan, huh? Okay, what would you consider your favorite Magik story from years past?

CHRIS: So many. Illyana in Asgard … on the run from the Shadow King with Warlock … and of course *Inferno*.

SPOTLIGHT: *New Mutants Special Edition*, and *New Mutants* #32-34 and #71-73 — great choices! The recent *Mystic Arcana* one-shot was set during that Shadow King storyline, so clearly other people remember it fondly too – and I have to admit that I'm very partial to the Asgard storyline as well.

So, Chris, what *is* it about Magik that keeps us all so riveted? I mean, she was written out of the New Mutants' book in 1989, almost twenty years ago — but it seems like she never left the hearts and minds of X-Men fans. Even now, decades later, she's a beloved character, and fans clamor for her return on a regular basis. You and Craig might not know it, but you've fulfilled the long-held dreams of many an X-fan this past summer. What do you think it was about Magik that fostered such fierce loyalty and popularity among the readers of X-Men?

CHRIS: I can't speak for everybody, but I think the coolest thing about Magik is simply *everything*. She's a teleporting, time traveling, mutant demon sorceress with a cigar chomping demon at her side, a magical sword in her hand, and control of a hellish dimension. I don't know what you actually could do to make her cooler, except of course what we did: make her be alive again.

More seriously, I think the appeal of Illyana was that her humanity was at stake. Her soul was corrupted by Belasco and she constantly struggled with the darkness inside of her. But that's what made her a hero: she strove to be good when her nature was telling her to be bad. And when she fell, her friends helped her back into the light. She's a classic.

SPOTLIGHT: Well said. So, in *New X-Men #37-41*, Belasco retook Limbo, and used his black magic to literally raise Illyana from the dead. How did the idea of resurrecting Magik come about? Was it a recent plan, or had you been pushing for it since you took over the book?

CHRIS: Craig and I pitched it to [editor] Mike Marts pretty early on, a good 9-10 months before the first "Quest For Magik" issue came out. We saw the opportunity that made sense, and most importantly, that tied the story to the New X-Men kids.

SPOTLIGHT: You tied that story into a lot of things: Bloodstones, Limbo time, the Black Sun storyline, Nightcrawler having the original Soulsword. It looks like you guys really did your research. Did you re-read every Magik appearance before writing this arc?

CHRIS: I already had. I brushed up on the older stuff, but yeah — the challenge of comics is reconciling decades of stories into something awesome, but understandable.

SPOTLIGHT: You even threw in an obscure reference to other girls that Belasco had kidnapped before Illyana — Beatrice, from *Dante's Inferno*, and Shanna the She-Devil herself. It occurs to me that this would be a terrific premise for a mini-series. Any chance of seeing a small army of demon girls with soulswords?

CHRIS: If Frank Cho is drawing it, hell yes.

SPOTLIGHT: I'd buy it. Say, speaking of artists, you worked with Skottie Young on this arc, not long after his recent *New Warriors* limited series. And for the prologue issue, *New X-Men #37*, Niko Henrichon lent his considerable talents to illustrating the "Limbo flashback" sequences. So how did you and Craig like working with the two of them?

CHRIS: Niko set such an amazing, storybook tone with his portraits, it was like seeing a dream.

SPOTLIGHT: You're not kidding. My personal favorite was a mind-blowingly intricate double-page spread of Belasco facing down all the demons in Limbo (reproduced elsewhere in this article). And Skottie?

CHRIS: Skottie really captured the chaos and insanity of Limbo - he hit it out of the park. Couldn't be happier.

"She's a teleporting, time traveling, mutant demon sorceress with a cigar chomping demon at her side, a magical sword in her hand, and control of a hellish dimension. I don't know what you actually could do to make her cooler, except of course what we did: make her be alive again." – *NEW X-MEN* WRITER CHRIS KYLE ON MAGIK

MYSTIC ARCANA: Meet Ian McNee!

Writer David Sexton came to Marvel with a mission: tie together the mystical fabric of the Marvel Universe in a series starring some of its most renowned mystical characters. Quarterbacking the event known as *Mystic Arcana*, Sexton provided rough plots for the feature stories starring Magik, Scarlet Witch, Black Knight and Sister Grimm of the Runaways (written by such luminaries as Louise Simonson, Jeff Parker, Roy Thomas and C.B. Cebulski). Each feature story augmented the overarching tale told across each book's backup tale starring Ian McNee, the magician plucked from the obscurity of an old *Marvel Fanfare* story to provide the dramatic thrust of *Mystic Arcana*. And does Ian McNee know drama! Stringing together a series of escapades that has him cross paths with Egyptian goddesses, undersea followers of Set, and the timeless Morgan Le Fay, McNee seeks out the objects of his quest in his own inimitable style.

Describing the seed of his idea to center his story around this cocky, overconfident, yet capable magician, Sexton says, "Just before I began working on *Mystic Arcana*, I read 'Jonathan Strange & Mr. Norrell' by Susanna Clarke. I loved the book, especially the interplay between the two title characters and I thought it might be interesting if there was another voice in the Marvel Universe with ideas about magic. Dr. Strange is *the man*. He *knows* how things work." And, of course, this is where Ian McNee comes in: the other extreme of Dr. Strange that he found so tantalizing in that first *Fanfare* story. "That story really stayed with me. It may have partly been (because it was) the first time I saw Charles Vess' art, which certainly made an impression, but I also loved that this kid decided he was going to take on Dr. Strange. What hubris!"

It is this hubris that pushes Ian McNee to find himself in the kind of trouble that his writer, Sexton, loves to try and get him out of! "Ian is a very flawed hero. His arrogance and competitiveness are covering up for his insecurity. Sometimes Ian's need to be "the best" overwhelms his need to be good. That makes him interesting to me. Flaws are fun to write."

Drawn by Eric Nguyen, the Ian McNee stories are a fun new way to look at Marvel Magic, and a great excuse to tell some flat-out awesome stories with much-loved characters like Scarlet Witch and Magik. Combined with the *Marvel Tarot*, also written by Sexton, this magical event will arrive in stores in an oversized, deluxe hardcover in December.

SPOTLIGHT: Agreed. And it doesn't hurt that he draws a dead-on Magik, either. So, on a story level – Belasco tried to bring Magik back to life with his spells, but he got the soulless Darkchild instead of the complete Illyana Rasputin – and he rejected her. Belasco considers the Darkchild to be a different person than Illyana – but what do you consider her? Is she a twisted copy of the original, still-dead Illyana? Or is she the real deal, magically resurrected but missing her still-dead soul? Or something in between?

CHRIS: The real deal, just missing her soul. Which Belasco – and now Magik – feel is still out there.

SPOTLIGHT: That's a great cliffhanger ending, by the way – when we last see her, Magik has defeated Belasco, is ruling Limbo once again, and is plotting to get her soul back. So do you have any plans for Magik in the future? Are there any tantalizing teasers that you can drop for the *Spotlight* faithful?

CHRIS: There are plans, and it's going to be gorgeous. And the next thing you see her in won't necessarily be from us…

SPOTLIGHT: Hear that, Illyana-philes? Keep your eyes peeled in the months to come, because with her teleporting powers, Magik could show up literally anywhere!

One last question, Chris…after being depowered, killed, kidnapped, tortured, blown up and sent to hell…when are the poor New X-Men kids going to catch a break?

CHRIS: *NEVER!*

SPOTLIGHT: 'Nuff said!

Check out Magik's adventures in the NEW MUTANTS CLASSIC VOL. 2 TPB, ESSENTIAL X-MEN VOL. 6 and X-MEN: INFERNO TPBs, and the upcoming NEW X-MEN: CHILDHOOD'S END VOL. 5 TPB and MYSTIC ARCANA PREMIERE HC!

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